



## **INTERNATIONAL ELEPHANT FOUNDATION | Interim Report July 2017 – Conservation Lower Zambezi**

**Project title:** Support to Wildlife Protection Efforts in the Lower Zambezi National Park

### **Investigators, affiliation and contact information:**

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**Project Start Date:** 1 January 2017

**Anticipated completion date:** 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017

### **Overall and specific conservation needs this project addressed:**

Based on the most recent aerial survey, the Lower Zambezi National Park is home to an estimated at 1,125 elephants (DNPW, 2016). This reflects a dramatic decrease from the 2,200 elephants estimated in the 2013 survey (Viljoen, 2013). Despite ongoing law enforcement efforts by the local wildlife protection authority (Department of National Parks and Wildlife, DNPW) supported by CLZ, elephant poaching has dramatically increased since 2013 when only 10 elephants were poached in the park and neighbouring GMAs. In 2016, of the 118 elephant carcasses found in the area, 107 were killed for their ivory. This population of elephant forms part of an important population stronghold for the African elephant that roams across international borders in the Lower Zambezi Valley (Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe). Escalating levels in elephant poaching in the Lower Zambezi highlight the need to strengthen law enforcement efforts in the area. Furthermore, the area is also experiencing high/unprecedented levels of deforestation fueled by the nation's illegal charcoaling industry.

DNPW remains critically underfunded which has led to severe shortages in manpower, limited mobility and limited access to funds for operational costs. This severely restricts DNPW in effectively fulfilling its mandate as the local wildlife protection authority, and negatively impacts on the morale and dedication of its officers and staff. DNPW relies heavily on support received from CLZ and its donors which was initiated over 20 years ago. This support has grown into a multi-faceted line of support including the following: support to foot patrols and scout equipment replacement, aerial patrolling, support to specialized anti-poaching units (canine, intelligence/information), 24/7 radio communication, database management of patrol and law enforcement data, court case tracking, and hosting of the Annual Operations Meeting. CLZ also employs and manages a Village Scout unit that adds manpower to DNPW scout teams. In light of the current poaching crisis and the ongoing lack in resources available to DNPW, CLZ is committed to sourcing funds for ongoing support to DNPW and its wildlife police officers in 2017 and 2018 (and beyond if need be).

### **Summary of Goals and Objectives:**

The overall goal of this project is to undertake 24 DNPW anti-poaching long patrols by Luangwa based teams, supported by the International Elephant Foundation and Kansas City Zoo (KCZ) over the grant period (144 DNPW patrols expected in total). Each five-man, 10-day patrol team receiving:

- Food rations;
  - Water drums, if necessary;
  - Deployment transport and movement during the patrol;
  - First Aid kit;
  - VHF radio handset and batteries and 24/7 communications with CLZ’s control room;
  - GPS devices for monitoring and data collection;
  - Brief before the patrol and de-brief at the end of the patrol for data and information collection and management;
  - Support from CLZ’s aerial patrols; and
  - Emergency rapid response assistance.
- Each patrol provides, daily track logs showing geographical coverage and distance walked by patrol teams that are recorded and managed by CLZ with GPS data downloaded and analysed in a Geographic Information System. Locations of illegal activities are then used to better manage the effectiveness of patrols by sending teams into areas where these activities are found to be concentrated. All data is shared with DNPW.
  - Detailed reports of poaching and anti-poaching activities and results are maintained and analysed.

**Actions taken to achieve the objectives:**

*DNPW Luangwa Patrols*

In the project period January 2017 – June 2017, CLZ supported a total of 5694.4 patrol man-days in the LZNP and Chiawa GMA, a total of 119.2 long (10-day) wildlife protection patrols (Please see Table 2). Please see Figures 1-3 for the GPS tracks from all the supported Luangwa DNPW Patrols and the resulting geographical coverage of wildlife law enforcement from January – June 2017.

CLZ has provided rations, batteries, communications, fuel & transport, movement during patrols, GPS’s, First Aid Kits and other patrol equipment to DNPW and Village Scout patrol teams in the Chiawa GMA and Lower Zambezi National Park in the project period.

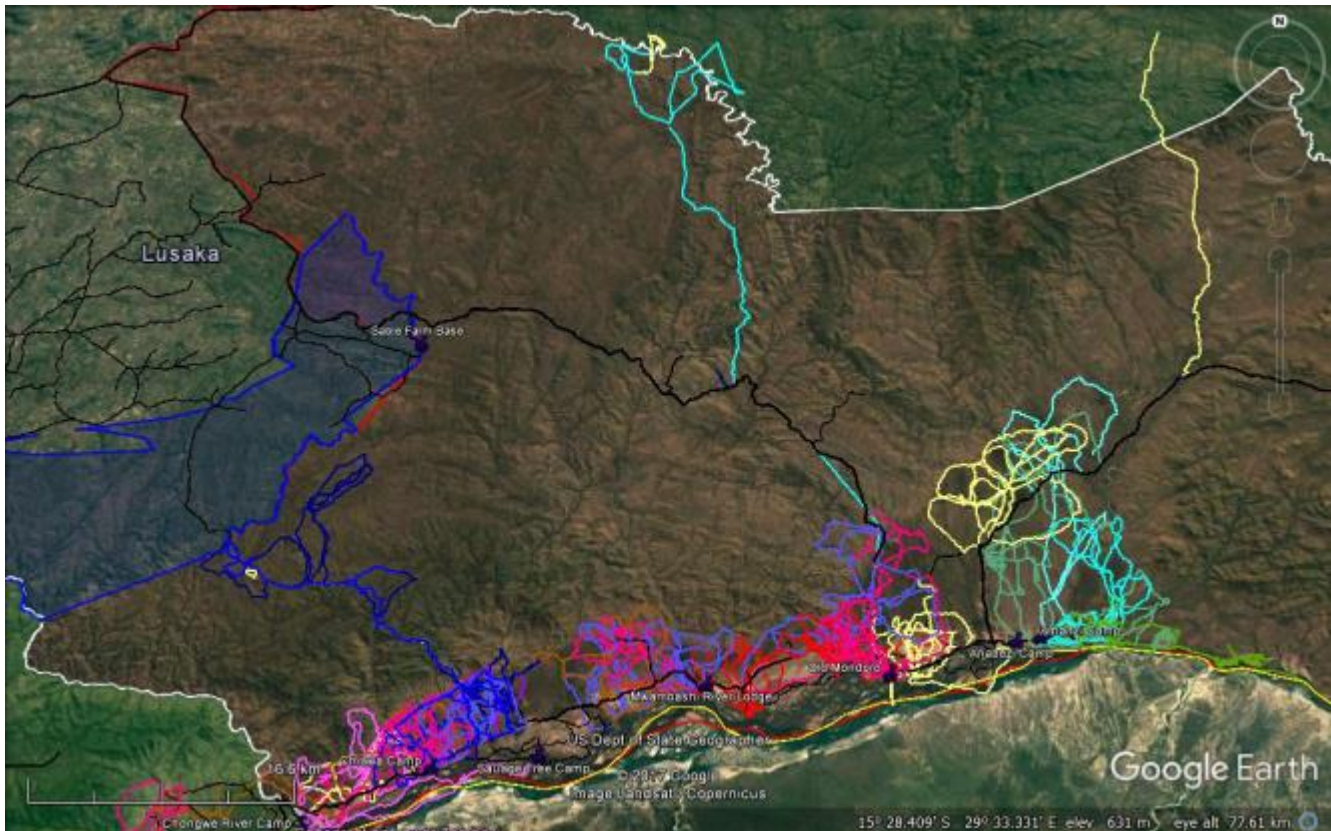
Mobile teams conduct day patrols from their camps and often move camps 2 or 3 times within the 10-day period. When illegal activities are reported during their patrol in the area, teams will respond and follow up, and where necessary, CLZ provide vehicle support.

<b>Table 1: Updated timeline of objectives achieved (January-June 2017) and outstanding (June-December 2017).</b>											
<b>DNPW Patrols</b>	<b>Month</b>										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Oct	Nov	Dec
VS long patrols in LZNP and Chiawa GMA	9.3	7.3	8.2	9.4	9.7	7.2	X	X	X	X	X

DNPW long patrols in LZNP and Chiawa GMA	12.2	14.6	12.6	10.8	9	10.3	X	X	X	X	X
Luangwa Patrols Undertaken in LZNP	2	2	2	2	2	2	X	X	X	X	X

**Table 2: Law enforcement efforts by DNPW and Village Scout patrol teams in the Lower Zambezi National Park and surrounding Game Management Areas in 2017.**

Month	Total Man-Days	Total Long Patrols	VS Man-Days	VS Long Patrols	DNPW Man-Days	DNPW Long Patrols	VS %	DNPW %
Jan	1038.4	21.5	430.4	9.3	608	12.2	41%	59%
Feb	1081	22	332	7.3	749	14.6	31%	69%
March	996	20.5	349	8.2	647	12.6	35%	65%
Apr	952	19.5	441	9.4	511	10.8	46%	54%
May	877	18.2	414	9.7	463	9.0	47%	53%
Jun	750	17.5	365	7.2	385	10.3	49%	51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5694.4</b>	<b>119.2</b>	<b>119.2</b>	<b>2331.4</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>3363</b>		
<b>Ave/Mth</b>	<b>949.1</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>388.6</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>560.5</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>58%</b>



**Figure 1 DNPW Patrol Tracks LZNP January - June 2017**

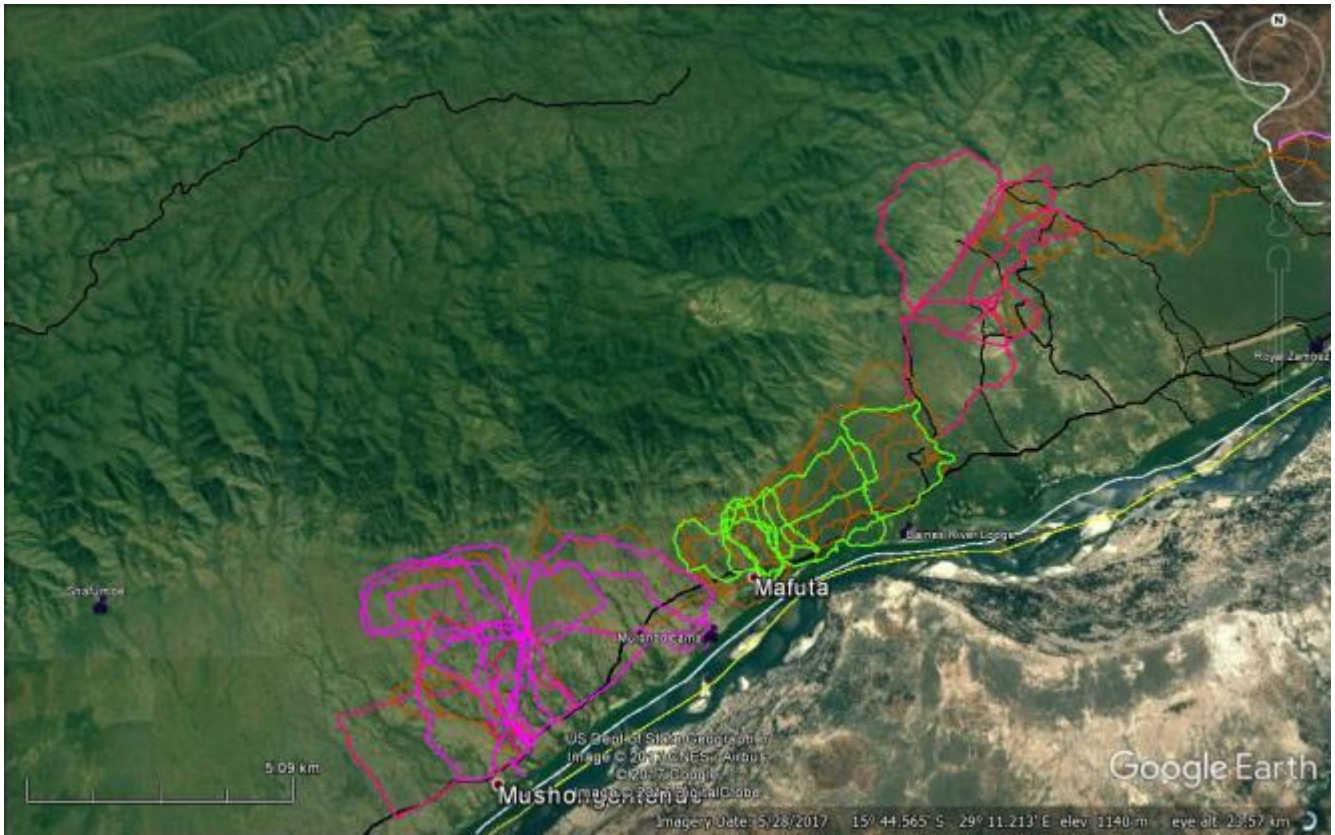


Figure 2 DNPW Patrols Tracks Chiawa GMA January - June 2017

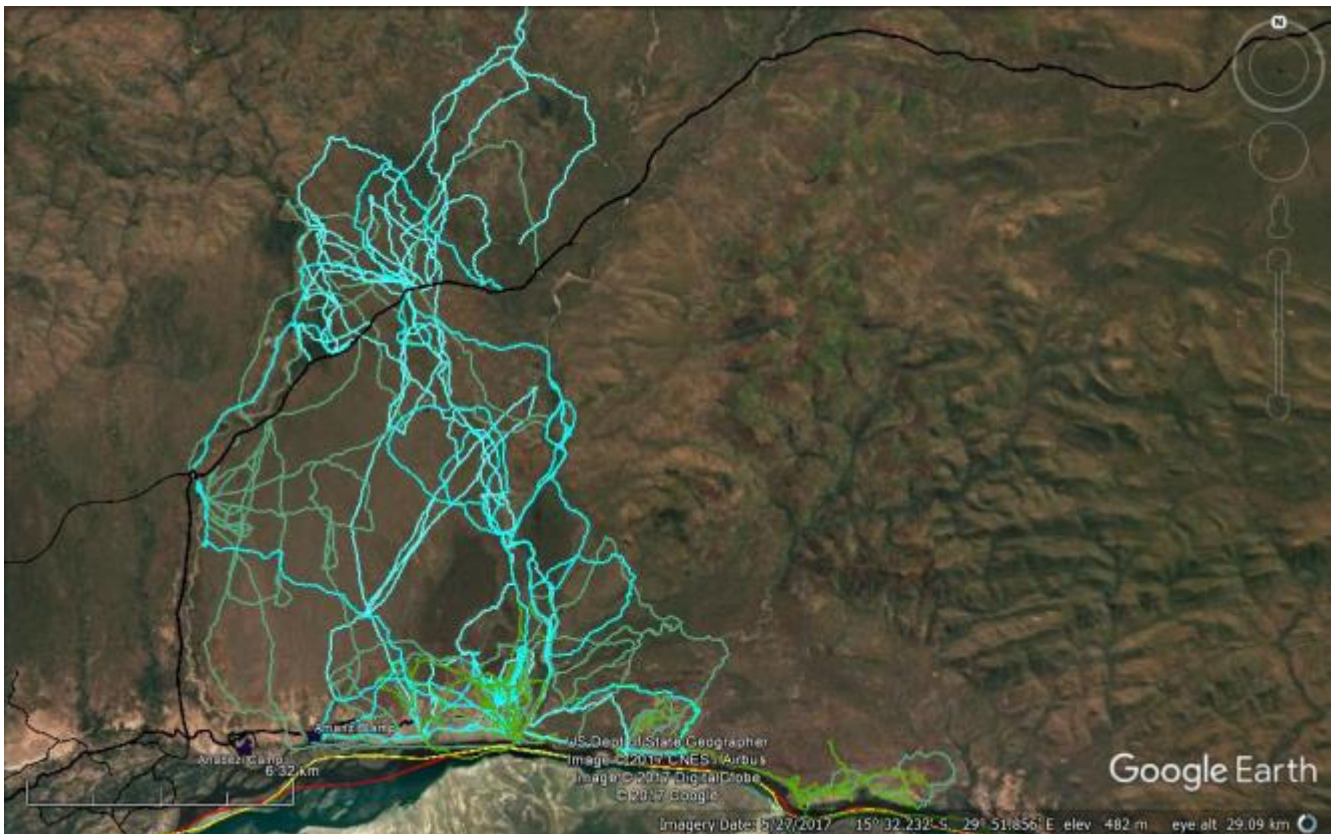


Figure 3 Luangwa Team Patrol Tracks LZNP January - June 2017

## Changes in Goals:

The goals of this project remain the same.

## Conservation Outcomes:

- Increased coverage and number of patrol man-days carried out in the Lower Zambezi National Park and surrounding GMAs dedicated to wildlife protection;
- A reduction in poaching levels and illegal activities in the park and GMAs, coupled with an increase in game densities and their distribution in the Lower Zambezi;
- Increased number of arrests and prosecutions of poachers;
- Increased number of recoveries through investigations – recoveries such as firearms, ammunition, snares, bush meat and ivory.

## Goals Achieved by Project

### *Number of poached elephants*

Over the first six months of 2017 the number of poached elephants recorded is lower than previous years (4 LZNP|3 GMA). This is lower than last year at this point (17 LZNP|23 GMA), however, due to heavy and late rains, the bush remains thick and the likelihood of finding all carcasses is lower.

### *Number of Successes*

The Lower Zambezi law enforcement units have had high success rates in the last two years, with some of the highest numbers of suspects apprehended and illegal items recovered. This year is no different with already 20 suspects having been apprehended (see table 3). Intelligence based law enforcement activities and the added Detection and Tracking dog unit are contributing to these high levels of success, we hope that this will have a positive impact on the number of elephants lost to ivory poaching in the coming years.

Table 3: Summary of all illegal activity incidents in the Lower Zambezi National Park and surrounding GMAs from Jan-June 2017, recorded by DNPW and Village Scout patrol teams.

Month	Special OPS	Suspects	Firearms	Poached NP	Poached GMA	Ivory	Ammunition	Snares	Drying Racks	Poacher's Camps
Jan	1	7	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	1
Feb	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	7	0	0
Mar	0	11	4	0	1	4	0	0	0	1
Apr	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	2	1
May	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	44	6	5
Jun	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	10
Total	3	20	7	4	3	11	0	51	9	18
Avg/Month	0.5	3.3	1.2	0.7	0.5	1.8	0	8.5	1.5	3

**Approximately how many humans are impacted by your project? Approximately how many elephants are impacted by your project?**

The safeguarding of wildlife in the Lower Zambezi widely affects the communities surrounding the national park, residing in the GMAs. In the nearest GMA, Chiawa, there are over 10,000 residents. These residents rely on the tourism industry as their main source of employment and income. Wildlife protection is vital to sustain employment in the Lower Zambezi.

There are approximately 1,125 elephants in the Lower Zambezi National Park and surrounding areas, this number is impacted by our project however the total Lower Zambezi ecosystem (spanning Zimbabwe and Mozambique) is said to be home to over 20,000 elephants, one of the last population strongholds in Africa.

**Problems**

*Elephant Poaching*

Following escalating trends in poaching across Africa, the Lower Zambezi is currently experiencing a surge in elephant poaching. Following a record-low of only five poached elephants in 2013, a massive decline from over 50 per year between 2008 and 2010 (24 in 2011, 11 in 2012), a total of 43 elephants were poached in the park (and 45 in surrounding GMAs) in 2015 (See Table 2). As of December 2016, the number of poached elephants in the park and GMA was 107 elephants – a record-high for the area.

In order to address this problem, we are continuing with our village scout and aerial patrols whilst still supporting DNPW patrols. As well as this, we are introducing new forces to combat the rise in poaching such as the Detection and Tracking Dog unit alongside strengthening investigations and informer networks in the area.

*Lack of Man Power and Internal Corruption*

Unfortunately, there are ongoing issues with internal corruption and leakage of information within DNPW operations which we are trying to combat. Introducing the digital radio system will play a key part in reducing the internal corruption as will the hand-picked specialised units we are and are planning to develop (Detection Dogs, Quick Response Teams and IIUs).

Since the Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) was taken over by the Ministry of Tourism and Arts as the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), there has been a greater lack of financial resources allocated to them for operational requirements. The restructuring has also resulted in a reduction of man-power as many people were not re-employed. The man-power is at a critically low level and has not been addressed as of yet. CLZ's Village Scout support already compliments over 40% of the patrol effort in the Lower Zambezi area and therefore we hope in 2017 that the government will begin to address these problems without the need for further support from CLZ. Note that although it may be needed in the future CLZ is reluctant to increase its Village Scout support as there is then less pressure on the government to address the issue.

**Was your project successful? State short and long-term goals that you are using to evaluate your accomplishments.**

**Short-term Goals**

- Two 15-day patrols undertaken by Luangwa based DNPW teams per month in the Lower Zambezi

- National Park;
- Improved geographic law enforcement coverage of LZNP and Chiawa GMA;
- Increased illegal activity encounters and recoveries of weapons and/or meat and ivory;
- Increased numbers of arrests; Increased detection of poacher's camps and snares;
- Improved quality and quantity of information observed and reported by patrols e.g. GPS coordinates, location and type of illegal activity, produced by SMART reports.
- Improved motivation of teams in the field.

### **Long-term Goals**

- Long term reduction of illegal activities;
- Increase in successes in the field;
- Decrease in elephant poaching.

### **Provide at least one human interest story**

At the beginning of the year, a Luangwa team based in the eastern end of the Lower Zambezi National Park ran out of ammunition, vital for their patrol. With quick communication from CLZ's Kulefu Operations Base in the LZNP, CLZ was able to mobilise their Cessna 172 – 9J CLZ, piloted by Ian Stevenson, and drop the required ammunition to the team in the field. The quick response and communications prevented the team's safety from being compromised in the field.

### **In 500 words or less, summarize the progress and results achieved. This will be used for media and donor recruitment.**

Thanks to funding from the IEF and KCZ, CLZ has been able to deploy Luangwa team patrols in the Eastern end of the Lower Zambezi National Park. The added support to law enforcement efforts in the LZNP is contributing to the anti-poaching strategy for the Lower Zambezi and in turn safeguarding the wildlife populations found here, for future generations. The support from IEF means that teams are efficiently equipped, fed and mobilised, motivating them further to undertake their job and effective law enforcement operations. In order to address the continent-wide elephant poaching crisis that is affecting the Lower Zambezi, CLZ is introducing new forces such as the detection and tracking dog unit, alongside strengthening investigations and informer networks in the area. However, these units must remain supported by the traditional and effective 'boots on the ground' method, supported by donors such as the International Elephant Foundation.

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### **Organisations associated with this project and their roles in the project:**

#### ***Department of National Parks and Wildlife***

CLZ work under a memorandum of understanding with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) – formerly the Zambian Wildlife Authority - and consult with them about all anti-poaching and community

engagements, as they are the wildlife protection agency in the area.

***Chiawa Community Resource Boards***

The Village Scout unit and community engagement projects both occur in consultation with the Community Resource Boards (CRBs) in the 5 districts around the Lower Zambezi National Park. The support of these governing bodies is vital for the success of Conservation Lower Zambezi.

**Do you intend to publish and/or present your findings at a conference or symposia? Please provide us information about the journal/conference/symposia and a timeframe. Please send a copy of all future publications that result from this study. No**